

## What Do We Need to Create a Good Society?

Edge Hill University

11<sup>th</sup> October 2017

### Event Notes...

#### Introduction

A welcome and brief review of the Good Society session held on 29 June 2017 was given:

“This event is a follow up to the June ‘[What Makes A Good Society](#)’ session, which took place during the University’s [Festival of Ideas](#), and where we invited participants to discuss how to influence policy-makers and decision-makers, and what the necessary ingredients for a good society are. We hope to continue the discussion and we are keen that this event is seen as an ‘open’ discussion; there are no formal speakers and the intention is to explore the ideas raised by our discussions in June.

These ranged from:

- The extent to which we can even discuss the idea of a ‘good society’ without examining the underlying social, economic, and political structures present;
- The question of the impact of the Global Financial Crisis on the way in which alternatives to austerity were framed;
- The question of whether there is a distinction between ‘civil society’ and a sense of community activism and whether these are important for our discussion;
- The sense that the [Webb Memorial Trust projects](#) lacked a historical/political analysis.

These are only a few of the questions raised. Our hope is that this will be an opportunity to explore some of these questions and there will be others too. We look forward to welcoming you to this continuing conversation.”

#### Summary of Conversations

Three discussion groups wished to consider three topics:

##### 1. What is a Good Society?

A Good Society is about having a safe and meaningful participation and values around kindness and caring being important. The idea of mutability is important. Values have a role in making change and feeling as if we have control over our lives. Rather than being shaped, it is trying to shape change. There is a role for Universities in creating the moral economy. If we are not activists, what are we?

##### 2. Local Opportunities for a Good Society

Education empowers, the opportunities for further education and part-time study are diminishing. There is perhaps a role for the University in offering further education. There is no opportunity for A-level learning in Skelmersdale.

Why is Ormskirk better off in terms of healthy outcomes than Skelmersdale? Perhaps because Ormskirk grew organically and Skelmersdale, as a new town was created.

Overspill estates are problematic. How people are being moved from communities due to a lack of housing. There is still a lot of work to do for people to have agency.

**I4P Annual Lecture 16 November: Lyndsey Hanley, Housing & Class** [edgehill.ac.uk/i4p/events](http://edgehill.ac.uk/i4p/events)

### 3. **A Good University?**

What is the University doing to help the local community? A Good University can get people on campus in the first place.

Ownership is important, who owns the University in the legal and moral sense? What is the contribution of those who own the assets?

Pre-June selection ownership was a given, but the election disputed this given. There is more public appetite for public ownership of key assets.

When things go wrong people think - who is going to fix this?

There is the relational nature of humanity. We need create opportunities for respectful, dignified relationships. We need to find a place where we are not looking to blame others, to feel secure enough that you find agency within yourself and to accept others. There is a palpable sense of authenticity in that.

#### **Two visions were shared:**

Is the role of the University to TRANSMIT KNOWLEDGE (To share history and relationships that motivate a commitment to change), or to offer TRANSFORMATIVE KNOWLEDGE (to encourage our students to become critical reflective thinkers)... the question of reflection (personal) and reflexively (considering larger structures that might be a barrier to thought).

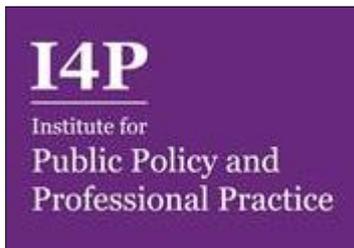
**IDEAS for future conversations:** What is a Good University?

*I4P invites you to join us:*

**Thursday 16th November 2017 at 6.00pm**

**I4P Annual Lecture 2017 with guest speaker LYNSEY HANLEY**

Lynsey writes regularly for the [Guardian](http://www.guardian.co.uk) and Financial Times, and has written for the New Statesman, Prospect, the Daily Telegraph, and Sunday Times. Her first book was the critically acclaimed [Estates: an Intimate History](#), a personal and social history of council housing in the UK. In 2010 she wrote and presented a three-part essay series on class and social mobility for BBC Radio 4, titled Wall in the Mind. [More information.](#)



[edgehill.ac.uk/i4p/](http://edgehill.ac.uk/i4p/)

[edgehill.ac.uk/i4p/events](http://edgehill.ac.uk/i4p/events)